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FM AMEMBASSY NIAMEY
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4059
INFO RUEHUJA/AMEMBASSY ABUJA PRIORITY 0159
RUEHAS/AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY 3417
RUEHBP/AMEMBASSY BAMAKO PRIORITY 0430
RUEHDK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR PRIORITY 1895
RUEHNJ/AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA PRIORITY 1533
RUEHNK/AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT PRIORITY 4789
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 0646
RUEHRB/AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY 1725
RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS PRIORITY 0191
RUZEHAA/CDR USEUCOM INTEL VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY
RHMFIS/CDR USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY
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RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L NIAMEY 000097

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TAGS: PREL PTER PGOV NG FR

SUBJECT: NIGER: ENGAGEMENT WITH FRANCE IN TSCTP COUNTRIES

REF: (A) NIAMEY 0081 (B) DAN EPSTEIN 1/4 E-MAIL

Classified By: Donald W. Koran, DCM, reasons 1.4 (b/d)

¶1. (U) Following is in response to ref b e-mail request for information regarding engagement with France in TSCTP countries.

¶2. (C) French security interests in Niger are far greater than our own:

-- There are more French than American citizens in Niger. Any security incident is therefore much more likely to affect French than American lives. For example, the French were concerned about the recent attack on Tanout (ref a) because several of their citizens were visiting the town at the time. In fact, the French citizens were staying with the Prefet, who was the focus of the attack. (The French were not at the Prefet's house at the time of attack and were unharmed.)

-- French economic interests are considerably greater. In particular, Nigerien uranium, currently mined by two companies affiliated with the French company Areva, plays a key role in France's electricity sector. Security threats to the export of that uranium from northern Niger to the port of Cotonou could lead to power outages in France and considerable financial losses for Areva. Areva recently signed a contract for an additional \$1.6 billion investment in Niger.

¶3. (C) Given its interests, France is very concerned about all threats to Nigerien security and stability, to include the Tuareg rebellion, crime and political turmoil (including the rivalry between president Tandja and former PM Amadou), as well as terrorism and Islamic extremism. It is also concerned about people and drugs trafficked through Niger to Europe. French Embassy officials generally believe that, while AQIM personnel may occasionally pass through Niger, there are no signs of current AQIM operations here, but the threat remains. They are also concerned about Islamic extremism coming from Nigeria.

¶4. (C) While France's security interests are broader than ours, there is no inherent conflict between their interests and ours. French initiatives to foster internal security and stability, as well as to interdict human and drug

trafficking, tend to reduce the threat of terrorism and Islamic extremism. Following are some of France's activities which have direct or indirect effects on terrorism and Islamic extremism, although they are not generally labeled as counterterrorism programs.

-- A military cooperation program to assist the Nigerien armed forces.

-- A police cooperation program focused on training police, interdicting human and drug trafficking, and enhancing border security.

-- Development, educational and cultural programs which may help stem Islamic extremism.

15. (C) We are in regular contact with our French counterparts at all levels) Ambassador, DCM, DAO, RAO, AID and Consular.

The one exception is the French police presence, which would be the normal contacts of a Legatt or DEA office, if there were one here. This is probably the area where the Washington consultations could be particularly useful. It may provide an opportunity to elicit information on subjects such as smuggling networks and border security gaps that may inform the counter-terrorism discussions.

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